

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the interview granted on January 25, 2006. Applicants believe that an agreement has been reached with the Examiner regarding amended claims 1 and 11, as discussed below. Claims 1, 2, 4-11, and 13-18 are now pending in the application. Claims 3 and 12 have been cancelled. The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 1 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicants regard as the invention. Claims 1 and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being incomplete for omitting essential structural cooperative relationships of elements, such omission amounting to a gap between the necessary structural connections. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 1 and 11 have been amended to claim "an acute angle defined at an interface between said sidewalls and said boundary element." As discussed with the Examiner in the January 25, 2006 interview, this amendment overcomes the rejection to the claims under §112. As such, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 1-4 and 7-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Marchand et al. (U.S. Pat. No. 6,649,297, hereinafter "Marchand"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicants note that claims 5 and 6 are indicated as rejected on page 1 of the Office Action, however, no references are cited for the rejection.

At the outset, Applicants note that claims 1 and 11 have been amended to include "an acute angle defined at an interface between said sidewalls and said boundary element," as discussed with the Examiner during the January 25, 2006 interview. This feature is believed to place the claims in condition for allowance, as discussed with the Examiner.

Specifically, Applicants note that the Examiner previously cited Figures 7 and 8 of Marchand in his rejection of claims 3 and 12. The Examiner particularly noted that "the channel comprises a ramped sidewall such that the acute angle is formed at an interface angle." Claims 1 and 11 specifically require channel sidewalls formed in the separator plate and the boundary element to have an acute interface angle.

As discussed with the Examiner, an angle of greater than ninety degrees is formed between the sidewalls of the channels 74, 75 in Marchand and the boundary element 76 shown in Figure 7. Similarly, in Figure 8, the channel portions (formed by the open portion of plates 81 abutting boundary elements 84) have an interface angle of greater than ninety degrees between sidewalls of the channel portions 81 and the boundary elements 84.

As such, claims 1 and 11 appear to be in condition for allowance. The amendments to the claims do not raise new issues requiring further examination, as discussed with the Examiner. Specifically, original claims 3 and 12 present limitations that should have resulted in the newly amended features being searched in earlier Office Actions.

Claims 2 and 4-10 depend from claim 1 and claims 13-18 depend from claim 11 and should be in condition for allowance for the reasons set forth above. Therefore, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 4-11, and 13-18 are respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested. If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (248) 641-1600.

Respectfully submitted,

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